

Green Groups' Joint Statement to Call for Subsiding the Elevated Social Unrest

13 November 2019

No matter which side of the political divide you find yourself standing in, all of us would agree that our society is being pushed by brute forces towards a precipice.

Violence and the unchecked use of force will NOT resolve deep-seated political conflicts and will not settle social unrests. The firing of more tear gas canisters, the deployment of water cannons, and the shooting of rubber bullets will do unrepairable harms to people of all walks of life as well as all of Hong Kong.

Tear gas is a chemical weapon. The shooting of over 7,500 pieces of tear gas canisters over the last five months into almost every district of this high-density compact city--with ordinary Hongkongers in shopping malls, residential estates, universities, schools and even kindergartens exposed to a complex mix of toxic chemicals--is insane and is a totally unacceptable behaviour in a civilized society, which we claim to be one here in Hong Kong. The chemicals released by tear gas can cause severe acute effects and potentially long-term health impacts on those who have been intentionally targeted, or inadvertently exposed to, especially young children and the elderly.

Is this the intention of the Chief Executive Carrie Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor?

The public do not know what chemical substances have been released by these chemical weapons as well as their long-term health impacts. The Food and Health Bureau and the Environment Bureau should immediately advise the general public in regard to the types and extents of health hazards resulting from the exposure to such chemicals and recommend effective methods to remedy any residual effects from the exposure to these chemicals used by this administration.

Politicians of all stripes and the administration should be aware that brute forces can never resolve political conflicts—they can only be resolved via dialogues and negotiations.

We urge the Chief Executive Lam Cheng Yuet-ngor to:

- (1) Order the Police Force to strictly adhere to the stringent guidelines in using their weapons and to refrain from metering out excessive violence so as not to aggravate social fear and unnecessary harms on innocent citizens;
- (2) Follow the advice of local and overseas professionals regarding an independent investigation of all the social unrest incidents, as well as the health impacts of tear gas;
- (3) Keep organizing townhall meetings in every district to allow the public to air their views in a calm setting and for the administration to offer constructive recommendations.

The joint statement is co-issued by the following green groups (in alphabetical order)

350HK

CarbonCare InnoLab

Ecobus

Eco-Education and Resources Centre

Ecology & Biodiversity Society, SS, HKUSU

Friends of Green

Green Power

Greeners Action

Greeners South

HKHERP

HKWildlife.net

Lantau Buffalo Association

Lung Mei Environmental Education Centre Mind Your Waste

Mind Your Waste

Natural Network

Project CROW

Save Lantau Alliance

Society of Hong Kong Nature Explorers

The Conservancy Association

The Green Earth

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